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CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN THESIS/DISSERTATION WRITING AT BICOL COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

This correlational study investigates the time management skills of graduate students at Bicol College who are enrolled in thesis/dissertation writing. The study focuses on eight key aspects of time management: goal setting, task prioritization, time planning, adaptability and flexibility, procrastination management, distraction management, stress and time pressure management, and self-motivation. Additionally, it explores the supportive factors that influence these skills, including personal factors (e.g., self-discipline, motivation) and institutional factors (e.g., mentorship, resource access). Challenges faced by the students, such as procrastination and difficulty in prioritizing tasks, are also identified. The study seeks to infer a significant agreement on the rank order of time management skills and supportive factors, ultimately aiming to develop a framework to improve these skills among graduate students. Findings indicate that while students demonstrate good time management overall, stress management remains a key area for improvement. The role of personal factors, such as peer support and work-life balance, is seen as more influential than institutional support, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to enhance productivity in thesis/dissertation writing. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing the multifaceted nature of time management to help students succeed in their academic pursuits.

KEYWORDS: - : Time management, thesis writing, dissertation writing, graduate students, goal setting, task prioritization, procrastination management, stress management, personal factors, institutional support, adaptability, productivity, higher education, Bicol College.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Thesis and dissertation writing is a vital component of graduate education, demanding not only academic expertise but also effective time management skills. Despite technological advancements, graduate students globally—especially in developing countries like the Philippines—continue to face challenges in managing their time due to overlapping commitments such as work, family, and studies. This issue is particularly relevant at Bicol College, where the development of graduate programs aligned with global standards intensifies the need for time management support.

Recent research highlights the critical role of time management in thesis completion. Jackson et al. (2022) assert that students with effective time management experience lower stress and higher academic success. Wu and Harris (2023) emphasize institutional interventions, like workshops and mentoring, as key to improving these skills. In the Philippine context, studies reveal that economic pressures and cultural obligations often hinder students' ability to allocate time for research. Mendoza and Cruz (2022) found that structured schedules positively impact thesis progress, while Ramos (2023) showed that institutional support reduces delays and stress.

Regional studies offer deeper insight. Garcia and Santos (2022) reported that graduate students in the Bicol Region struggle to balance academic and personal duties, often resulting in thesis delays. Manalo (2022) confirmed a positive correlation between time management and academic performance among students in Luzon and Visayas, underscoring the value of institutional support. Similarly, Magnaye (2022) found that while students perceive themselves as competent researchers, they cite lack of time and training as major obstacles.

This study aims to explore the **correlation between time management skills and thesis completion among graduate students at Bicol College**, addressing a significant gap in local research. Its findings will inform institutional strategies to enhance graduate student outcomes and promote academic excellence. As the Philippines advances its education system, empowering students with effective time management practices becomes essential for national development and innovation.

2.0 FRAMEWORK

This study investigates the correlation between time management skills and thesis/dissertation writing among graduate students at Bicol College. To explain and support the variables of this correlational study, the researcher draws upon three key theories:

1. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), SDT explains how autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster intrinsic motivation. Graduate students with autonomy in planning and executing research tasks are more likely to develop effective time management practices. When institutions foster autonomy-supportive environments, students experience greater volition, leading to improved engagement and task persistence (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). In the thesis-writing context, intrinsic motivation drives goal-setting, prioritization, and persistence in managing long-term academic tasks.

2. Goal Setting Theory

Locke and Latham (1990, 2002) posit that specific, challenging goals lead to enhanced performance. Applied to thesis writing, the theory suggests that students who set clear and measurable goals—such as task deadlines and milestones—are more productive and focused. Feedback and self-efficacy play essential roles in maintaining goal commitment. Goal setting, therefore, forms a crucial component of graduate students' time management skillsets.

3. Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)

Sweller's CLT emphasizes that working memory is limited and performance declines when cognitive overload occurs. Thesis writing involves complex tasks that can overwhelm students. Effective time management—through task prioritization, minimizing distractions, and segmenting work—reduces cognitive load and enhances focus and efficiency.

These three theories offer an integrated lens for analyzing how internal motivation, structured goals, and cognitive strategies interact to influence time management in graduate students.

Researcher's Framework: Graduate Student Time Management Enhancement Framework

To support the above theories and contextualize them within the Philippine graduate education system, the researcher proposes the **Graduate Student Time Management Enhancement Framework**, which includes:

- **SDT Integration:** Align thesis writing with personal goals to nurture intrinsic motivation.
- **Goal Setting:** Encourage breaking down thesis tasks into specific, attainable goals.
- **Cognitive Load Management:** Teach strategies such as prioritization and time blocking to optimize mental focus.
- **Adaptive Time Management:** Acknowledge individual learning styles and encourage flexible strategies tailored to students' preferences.
- **Institutional and Personal Support:** Balance self-discipline with institutional support like mentoring, workshops, and deadlines.
- **Continuous Feedback and Improvement:** Implement self-assessment and regular mentoring sessions to refine students' time use strategies.

This framework serves as a practical model to guide both students and institutions in improving time management skills related to research writing.

The study adopts the **CIPP Evaluation Model (Context, Input, Process, Product)** to structure the investigation:

- **Context:** Assesses the significance of examining time management skills among graduate students writing theses at Bicol College, emphasizing the impact of cultural and academic pressures.
- **Input:** Ensures a solid foundation through relevant literature, ethical research practices, validated instruments, and appropriate statistical tools to assess correlations.
- **Process:** Focuses on how time management is applied and improved during the research process, identifying key challenges and interventions to be analyzed during implementation.

- **Product:** Evaluates the overall impact of students' time management on thesis completion and academic performance, offering actionable insights for institutional development and student support.

Together, these frameworks (theoretical and conceptual) provide a comprehensive structure for examining how graduate students at Bicol College manage their time during the demanding thesis/dissertation writing process and how both personal and institutional factors influence their success.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This study examined the Correlational Study of Graduate Students Time Management Skills in Thesis/Dissertation Writing at Bicol College. Specifically, it examines the Time Management Skills in terms of: a. Goal Setting, b. Task Prioritization, c. Time Planning, d. Adaptability and Flexibility, e. Procrastination Management, f. Distraction Management, g. Stress and Time Pressure, and h. Self-Motivation. Analyze the supportive factors that influence time management skills by the respondents, such as: a. Personal, and b. Institutional. Determine the challenges that respondents face in managing their time. Infer the significant agreement on the rank order of the respondent's management skills and supportive factors. And developed a frame that will support/improve the time management skills of the respondents in thesis/dissertation writing.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed the mixed-methods approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research can provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the multifaceted phenomenon of time management in the context of thesis/dissertation writing. Combining quantitative and qualitative data sources enhances the validity and reliability of the findings through triangulation.

A survey questionnaire was designed to assess various aspects of graduate students' time management skills, identify supportive factors, and explore challenges they face in managing their time during thesis/dissertation writing. The instrument is divided into three parts: Part 1 was focused on the time management skills such as: goal setting, task prioritization, time planning, adaptability and flexibility, procrastination management, distraction management, stress and time pressure, and self-motivation. Part 2 analyzed the supportive factors using the scale of 1 – 4 similar to Part 1, a scale from 1 to 4 is used to indicate levels of agreement or disagreement. Supportive factors are categorized into personal and institutional factors. For Part 3 are the challenges using scale ranges from 1 to 4, with 4 indicating "Strongly Agree" and 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree." The challenges cover a range of issues, including goal-setting difficulties, procrastination, task prioritization, distractions, workload and stress management, support systems, work-life balance, and technology use.

The data gathering procedure for this study involves a systematic and ethical approach to collecting information from graduate students at Bicol College regarding their time management skills,

supportive factors, and challenges during thesis/dissertation writing. The procedure is designed to ensure clarity, confidentiality, and the voluntary participation of the respondents.

The researcher obtained ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board or ethics committee before initiating data collection. It also has an informed Consent to develop a clear and comprehensive informed consent form that outlines the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality assurances, and the rights of the participants. The study encompasses students currently engaged in thesis/dissertation writing during the academic year 2022-2023, distributed across various programs: MSCJ (Master of Science in Criminal Justice) with 20 participants, MM (Master of Management) with 10 participants, MAEd (Master of Arts in Education) with 25 participants, EdD (Doctor of Education) with 9 participants, and PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) with 5 participants. The total number of potential respondents was 69. Despite this, the study achieved a commendable response rate, as 48 participants, constituting 70% of the total, provided their valuable input. This response rate is considered sufficient and robust for the researchers to derive meaningful insights and conduct a thorough analysis.

5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Then results of the study encompasses the time management skills such as goals setting, task prioritization, time planning, adaptability and flexibility, procrastination management, distraction management, stress and time pressure, and self-motivation of the writers from among the indicators showing that the respondents strongly agree. On the average score (AWM) gives an overall view of the performance of each program across all indicators. The MAEd program has the highest average score, indicating strong overall performance. The MM program has the lowest average score, suggesting that it may need improvement in various aspects of time management and productivity. The data for the MSCJ program is the most effective program in helping students to develop time management and productivity skills. This means this suggests that these programs are well-equipped to adapt to changing circumstances and demonstrate flexibility in their approach to tasks and challenges. For the supportive factors, the findings suggest that institutional policies, financial support, access to resources, and mentorship significantly contribute to the positive time management experiences of graduate students. Institutions should continue to refine and strengthen these areas, ensuring that policies are clear, financial support mechanisms are comprehensive, resources are easily accessible, and mentorship programs are robust. The results underscore the importance of a holistic institutional approach in providing a conducive environment for graduate students to excel in their academic pursuits. While for the challenges respondents face in managing their times, findings underscore the critical need for targeted interventions in workload and stress management, as these challenges are perceived as most pressing among graduate students. Addressing stressors related to workload and fostering a supportive environment for maintaining work-life balance should be prioritized. While procrastination and technological challenges are acknowledged, their comparatively lower rankings suggest that they may warrant tailored but less immediate attention. Overall, institutions can use this information to develop a nuanced and effective strategy that aligns with the specific needs and priorities of graduate students across diverse programs.

For the significant of agreement, it showed that the critical Chi-square value at $\alpha = 0.05$ and 7 degrees of freedom is approximately 14.07. Since the computed Chi-square value (23.1) is greater than the critical Chi-square value (14.07) at the 0.05 significance level, it rejected the null hypothesis (H_0). This indicates a significant agreement or difference in time management skills among the groups or activities. Based on the provided data and a significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. There is a significant agreement or difference in time management skills among the groups or activities being studied. This part of the statement summarizes the entire decision-making process. It reiterates that, with a significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis, indicating the presence of a significant agreement or difference in time management skills among the groups or activities in the study. the statement provides a clear and comprehensive explanation of how the decision to reject the null hypothesis is made based on the critical Chi-square value and the computed Chi-square value in the context of the study's significance level. While, for personal in the supportive factors, the computed Chi-square values (17.25 and 11.4) exceed the critical value of 7.81 at the 0.05 significance level, indicating a significant agreement or difference among the groups or activities analyzed, including institutional support. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative, confirming a statistically significant agreement among the groups based on the Chi-square test results. Therefore, the findings require a framework that will support or improve the time management skills of the respondents in thesis/dissertation writing.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study highlights that while students, particularly in the PhD and MSCJ programs, generally demonstrate strong time management and productivity skills, stress management and other related areas such as goal setting, prioritization, and use of technology remain challenging. Personal factors—like motivation, peer support, and work-life balance—are perceived to significantly influence time management, whereas institutional support is seen as less impactful. Respondents also reported common struggles with procrastination, staying focused, and managing workload and stress. These insights underscore the need for adopting a comprehensive framework that addresses both personal and institutional factors to enhance time management skills across academic programs.

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